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COVER: Snow Buntings, by John W. Taylor. Edgewater, Md.

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TODAY WATERFOWL—TOMORROW??

AMERICA'S waterfowl hunters and possibly even her waterfowl themselves suffered a setback last month when the Fish and Wildlife Service, under pressure of a lawsuit, agreed to file environmental impact statements on future waterfowl season. The suit would have effectively closed the 1974 waterfowl season. The morass of technical requirements for environmental impact statements could not have been complied with in time. To meet the prescribed environmental impact timetable federal wildlife officials may, in the future, have to make their surveys and estimates far in advance of their previous last minute evaluation. This means less factual information and more guesswork and estimates. Since the annual waterfowl crop can only be assessed accurately a few weeks before the framework is announced, making decisions months in advance to satisfy bureaucratic red tape will do little to safeguard our waterfowl. All this to satisfy a handful of groups whose only interest in waterfowl hunting is to see it stopped.

If they had succeeded or do succeed what could our waterfowl look forward to? No duck stamp money, no excise tax from waterfowl gunning supplies, only paltry handouts barely adequate to keep federal wildlife agency doors open. It is doubtful these preservationists could do much to shake loose any support for waterfowl refuges, banding programs, breeding ground preservation or winter food once the incentive and funds for these programs had been cut off.

Today waterfowl, tomorrow what – Deer? Quail? Squirrels? Turkeys? The Game Commission already sets these seasons 4 to 6 months in advance to meet current legal requirements. If they were forced to meet additional deadlines they might be put in the awkward position of setting next year's seasons before this year's were over. Our wildlife resources should be managed with the best data available.

Besides, the environmental norm is to have a hunting season similar to those in effect across the country this year. This has been going on in most states since the early 1900's. Seasons are always chosen to produce minimum environmental change. A closed season would produce the real change and I challenge any protectionist group to write a scientifically accurate environmental impact statement in support of it that would show the overall effect to be in the best interests of the country and its wildlife resources.

–HLG

LETTERS

UNANSWERED QUESTION

The article "Scram or Stay Put" by Alan Guthrie was very interesting but raised some question. What does the line dividing across Giles County represent? Since 5 of the 9 tags returned were from deer killed by poachers, I assume they were subsequently arrested and convicted. Do you have any idea why all deer seemed to travel toward the middle of the county?

Gale B. Webb
Abingdon

The line dividing Giles County is New River. The deer were trapped from Radford Arsenal which is on the New River and appeared to travel toward the River either searching for water or a landmark. The 5 deer were found dead in fields indicating illegal shooting but unfortunately the culprits are not always apprehended.

J. Alan Guthrie

INTERLUDE AMENDED

C. L. Lundgren did a nice job of describing his experiences in a beautiful section of Shenandoah Park in his article "Autumn Interlude" in the September Issue. However, changes in camping policies since that time might get others in trouble who try to duplicate the trip.

Primitive camping is allowed only when more than 250 yards from paved roads, more than one-half mile from campgrounds or other facilities and not within view of any of the above or of any unpaved road, trail shelter or another camping party or within 25 feet of a stream. Those planning to visit the parks are urged to write for complete two-page rules governing backcountry camping. Address - Shenandoah Park, Luray, Virginia 22835. – –Ed.

SYSTEM UNFAIR

Although I am from Suffolk, I usually take a few days off to hunt in Augusta County. I also want to hunt some in the Dismal Swamp but as I interpret the wording on the tabs if I kill a deer in the swamp, a 2 deer area, I cannot hunt in Augusta. Am I correct?

F. L. Forest, Jr.
Suffolk

Yes. Even if you use your number 1 tab in a 2 deer county you cannot hunt in any county with a one deer limit. This is to prevent using both tabs in a one deer county by claiming the first was used elsewhere. – Ed.

A simple and convenient way of preventing this would be to require the big game check card as proof of where the first deer was killed.

F. L. Forest

By BOB YORK
Criglersville

WEARILY, I made myself comfortable on the dirt encrusted roots of a big blowdown. To my left, across the logging road, was higher ground; a few big oaks and slender pines, very little low growth. To my right on the near side of the road the cover was thicker. It consisted of a low swale about seventy five yards wide, with higher ground and dense timber beyond. I had been there about five minutes when I thought I heard a sound.

What was it? Peering intently into the brushy tangle off to my right I tried to find with my eyes what my ears told me was moving out there.

Suddenly, there they were, three of them. I could tell two were bucks and that one of them was a beaut. I carefully eased back the hammer on the Marlin lever-action 30-30, using trigger counter-pressure to make sure there wouldn't be a click. But I knew I would wait. Too much brush. They weren't spooked. There was no breeze; and I wasn't making any because my breathing had stopped.

They were moving along slowly, purposefully, that sort of half-run, half-walk of the whitetail; but their direction was definite. They were going to cross the road. By now I had made my decision. I would wait until they reached the high ground on the other side. If I never fired a shot I would wait for the *good* shot. One time—just one time—the good shot. They were out of my vision now. Had I gambled right?

It was the last day of the hunting season in Virginia. The regulations read, "Bag limit, one. Either sex last day only." January 5, a day of bad weather, bad decisions, bad luck. And a stuck truck. I had unwisely decided to go down the last stretch of logging road leading to my favorite deer area. When I had second thoughts and tried to turn around I found myself athwart the road, the Chevvy pickup hopelessly mired, up to its axles in mud, roadside brush, and melting snow. Things couldn't have been worse.

You'd have to say I'm an eightball. You know my type. I don't necessarily spoil the pleasures of my hunting and fishing pals, but sometimes I do draw from them headshaking looks of pity, or disbelief. You know. Some of you have been there. If the fish have just started to strike, I get a backlash. If after the long wait the doves have come pouring in over the field, my gun jams. If a single quail rattles up out of that grass clump and gives me a classic eight foot straight-away shot, the Remington 1100 snaps to my shoulder and I click him to death with the safety on.

Now retired, I was manager of a chain drug store in Culpeper, Virginia, in the rolling plains piedmont section of the north-central part of the state, just east of the Blue Ridge Mountains. I'd always wanted a place in the country with a few acres where I could grow vegetables and a few head of cattle, and I got it. Not only did I want to get away from the big city hassle, but I wanted to get close to some good fishing and hunting as well.

Criglersville, the little village where I live, was twenty miles from my job but it gave me the best of two worlds. I was able to earn a good living at the work I liked best; yet by driving that twenty miles I could come home and shoot clay birds with my sons in the back field, or butcher a hog in the back yard. Nobody cared. If you could fly like a bird and you flew due west, in about fifteen minutes you'd cross the famous Skyline Drive of the Shenandoah National Park.

Back to my story. As I went to bed the night before, I tried to evaluate my prospects. A heavy snowfall from the week before still lay on the ground. That was good. But the forecast was for a warming trend. Not so good. Oh well, it couldn't get rid of all *that* snow.

When the alarm punched me awake at 4:30 it was to the accompaniment of steadily falling rain. For an instant I was tempted to snuggle back down into my cocoon. But then I remembered; "last day," like Christmas, comes but once a year. The rain would alter my clothing plans. I put on a red cotton flannel shirt over a rainproof parka. A quick breakfast, fix a lunch, grab the rifle and ammo; I was on my way.

An hour and fifteen minutes later, as I maneuvered the pickup over those CCC logging roads, I had a slight sense of foreboding. It was to be slippery going. The snow was melting faster than I thought. At one point, a mile from my favorite area, there is a T in the road. The upper part of the T is that mile, a road that runs along the side of a huge clear-cut (now beginning to grow back with seedlings), with woods on the left.

As described earlier, it was on this road that I stuck the truck. It was almost as if I were hell bent to foul up my last chance for a whitetail. Well, eightball, I thought to myself, you did it again. At this point I was so disgusted I decided to consign the extrication of my wheels to some vague and murky future time. I went hunting.

But it wasn't much good. With rain above me, wet snow under me and my spirits pretty soggy too, I still-hunted the next couple of hours. It was no go. Try as I would I couldn't get the damn truck off my mind. Then about ten o'clock the rain suddenly stopped and the sun came out. Warm. I came out of the woods to the terminus of the road.

Then things started to get better. There I met another hunter. He was standing in the road peeling off a couple of layers of clothing in deference to the sudden heat. He was preparing to go back and meet a buddy for lunch. I told him about my predicament.

"No sweat," he said. "I've got a shovel in my truck. We'll help get you out." A feeling of relief swept over me. Yes, things were looking up.

But it turned out to be a good hour of hard sweating labor. Dig, dig, dig; gain a foot. More mud and snow in the truck bed for balast. Dig some more. Finally we made it. At noon we had my ill-fated vehicle alongside his, back at the T.

I thanked my friends eloquently as they started to unwrap sandwiches. I reached for my own lunch. Whadda ya know? No lunch. I had made it and forgotten to bring it . . . eightball strikes again.

There was only one thing to do. I was hungry. I headed out of the Continental can land and nine miles down the blacktop to the general store at Todd's Tavern. As I slid and slipped on those wet clay roads, I almost decided to call it a day. The odds against me were getting longer and longer, and fast.

But something told me not to.

With sandwiches and coffee under my belt I felt better. I drove back in and parked at the T.

The big woods that paralleled the clear-cut was a combination of mixed conifers and hardwoods, with some laurel underneath. The snow that remained was laced with tracks. Plenty of deer here; I knew that. I had seen them more than once on previous visits, but never a decent shot; flag wavers, or too much brush. The time of day was all wrong. It was now two o'clock. All at once I realized that I was in the fringe of the woods and that I was adjacent to the big sawdust pile. (These sawdust piles make tremendous vantage points from which to scan the clear-cut and the woods edge. Many a deer has been toppled by hunters shooting from their peaks.)

There was a man on top.

He yelled, sotto voce, "Where'd ya park this time?"

I had to laugh. "Back at the T," I replied, using the same subdued tone. With a wave of my hand I turned left and went on down the road. About 150 yards from where this conversation took place the road turns and goes into the big woods. It had been my observation that there were more tracks on the curve than anywhere else.

This is where I mounted the roots of the blowdown and the three deer came into view. Then all the pieces fell into place.

I fixed my eyes overtop the little roadside cedars, waiting. When I saw a whitetail climbing the slight incline I couldn't believe my eyes. It was the prime buck. His rack looked to me like a TV antenna. The range was about sixty yards. He was still crossing more or less broadside to me. I laid the bead of the iron sights low on his shoulder. Mentally I was shouting, "Stop. Stop, beautiful! STOP!"

Believe it or not he stopped, framed full length between two big oaks. Incredible.

At the shot he whirled and started back down the slope the way he'd come, but just before he disappeared behind the cedars I saw his front legs collapse. If still running he would have to show again on the low side of the road. He didn't show. For five minutes I didn't move, but just watched the remaining buck and the doe. They were still on the lower side and still didn't know where I was. Finally they drifted back across the swale and into heavy cover.

I knew the big buck was mine. I climbed down from my perch and pushed through the screen of evergreens. Thirty yards away, he lay conveniently in the middle of the road.

As I was tagging my prize my friend came hurrying around the bend. "That's a mighty fine buck," he said. I agreed. He helped me dress him and drag him out. During this arduous chore, during one of our many rest stops, he said, "I saw those three deer down there in the brush."

"What!" I exploded. "Why didn't you shoot?"

He said, simply, "I didn't know where you were." Now understand this: the deer season was going to end in about two hours. He had three deer in sight, any one of which he could kill legally; he was carrying a rifle just like mine, except in .35 Remington, more than adequate for the 150 yards or so of range. He befriended me all day long and then passed up his one chance for game because good safety practice dictated 'don't shoot.' I am not mentioning his name because he'd be embarrassed; but he is a true sportsman in every sense of the word. There should be more like him.

The head was mounted by L. F. Lee, of Marshall, Virginia. I entered the rack in the eight-point competition in Virginia's offical Game Commission contest for that year. No, it didn't win an award, although it came close. But I had the fun of seeing it officially scored (156-4/8), and I believe it should have won somebody's award for perfection.

Claude Rogers glasses bay for feeding gulls.

CHESAPEAKE BAY BRIDGE-TUNNEL STRIPERS

By BOB GOOCH
Troy

GLANCING anxiously at Claude Rogers, I unhooked the sparkling silver-toned striped bass and slid it into the fish box. I was pleased with that school striper and hoped to land a few more like it, but I was not sure Claude shared my enthusiasm. In fact he had already racked his rod and was glassing the broad expanse of blue Chesapeake Bay.

Reading my host's thoughts, I knew my time over that school was limited. I commenced to fish frantically.

Claude lives in Virginia Beach, close to some of the best fishing along the Atlantic coast. He enjoys an enviable reputation. For many years his 44-pound, 10-ounce striped bass, captured in the Virginia Beach surf, held the state record. His record fell back in 1962, and I could not help but feel he was anxious to recapture his title.

"Disadvantage of fishing with a champion," I mumbled to myself. Claude knows his striper fishing, but he was not interested in the scrappy 2 and 3 pounders I was having a ball with.

Claude had not been too optimistic when I phoned him the day before. "We have had gale winds, and now the wind is blowing out of the northwest," he had warned. "The weather makes our winter fishing a risky proposition for anyone who has to travel far for it," he added. My home in the central part of the state is 150 miles from Virginia Beach.

But it was late December and I knew that winter run of stripers could not last much longer. My daughter, Pam, lives in Virginia Beach and teaches in the city school system. I decided to take a chance. Three hours later I turned into her driveway.

"I'll pick you up about 8 o'clock tomorrow," Claude advised when I reported my arrival. "No use in hurrying. The wind is calm now, but the water will be rough for awhile tomorrow."

Shortly after 8 o'clock the next morning we were speeding eastward across the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel, headed for the Eastern Shore where Claude keeps his boat much of the long fishing season.

He glanced at the water. A heavy chop was still kicking up. "Wind still out of the northwest and bucking an incoming tide, but the tide will change about noon and the water will calm down. We might as well wait until then to go out."

After lunch, we headed for a motel where Claude kept his trailered boat. We soon had it in tow and were en route to the Kiptopeke launching ramp.

Claude jockeyed the trailer into the shallow water and within minutes we were afloat and loading fishing tackle, boots and foul-weather gear aboard the big 18-foot seagoing outboard.

In spite of troublesome winds that swept cold air out of the northwest and down the broad Chesapeake Bay, it was a beautiful, crisp, sun-filled day. It was cold, a typical late December day, but we were dressed warmly. In fact the sun was so bright that Claude was concerned about sun and windburn. He applied protective lotion to his face and offered me some.

At the turn of the starter switch the big outboard motor purred smoothly. I was beginning to feel optimistic.

We wound slowly down a marshland creek and into a broad expanse of relatively calm water between Smith Island and the northern end of the bridge-tunnel. Once clear of the shallow water, we sped toward the long bridge. The unprotected water was choppy, but there were no whitecaps.

We passed beneath the bridge and turned left, running parallel to it. We then slowed to cruising speed and Claude turned on his ship-to-shore radio.

I listened anxiously to the idle radio chatter, but Claude shook his head. "They are not doing anything," he mumbled. We then swung back to the ocean side of the bridge and Rogers uncased his binoculars and started glassing the water. A handful of fishing boats danced on the gently rolling bay. Occasionally we met a boat trolling slowly along the bridge pilings.

I was disappointed. The Chesapeake Bay system has long been recognized as a prime breeding ground for

Trolling along the bridge pilings for stripers is popular.

the Atlantic striper fishery. Many marine biologists say it is the single most important breeding area for the anadromous fish that range the coastal waters from Nova Scotia to Florida. Known locally as rock, the striper has been popular among Chesapeake Bay anglers for years. A large resident population is boosted by the migratory fish that move in and out of the bay as they make their semiannual jaunts up and down the Atlantic Coast.

Then in the early 1960's striped bass fishing took on a refreshing new look when a rich new fishery was discovered right in the broad mouth of the Bay. Man and one of his engineering miracles was accidentally responsible. In 1962 the first pilings and rocky foundations were placed under water as the "ground floor" for the long planned Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel built to replace the ferry system that for years had shuttled automobiles and passengers between the Virginia mainland and the Eastern Shore. The tunnel to the north and nearest Cape Charles is known as Baltimore Channel and the southern one as the Thimble Shoal Channel. The islands are numbered one to four running south to north. Islands 1 and 2 are also known as South and North Island.

The system was opened to traffic in 1964, and in 1965 the exciting new striper fishery hit its peak along the long bridge-tunnel complex. Stripers, or rocks, true to their favorite Virginia name, fell in love with the big jumble of rocks, concrete and giant boulders.

Locating a school of bass is half the game in striper fishing. The winter fish are selective feeders, but once a school is located an angler can usually catch fish.

Many schools are found by trolling along the bay-bridge tunnel.

Probably a quicker way to find stripers is to watch for feeding birds—screaming, diving and wheeling gulls. Under the birds there is usually a school of bass feasting on shiners or menhaden. The birds dive for the tidbits the feeding fish leave. That is the reason Claude had his glasses along. He used them constantly, searching the water for signs of birds.

Skilled striper anglers also watch for oil slicks caused by feeding striped bass.

As we neared the middle of the bay the bridge disappeared into the choppy blue water, but then reappeared toward the other side of the bay. "That is the Baltimore Tunnel," Claude said, explaining the tunnel part of the bridge-tunnel structure. Across the wide expanse of open water a half dozen boats were anchored near the rocky artificial island.

"They are catching fish!" I exclaimed as an angler's rod bent sharply and then started vibrating.

"Tautog," said Claude.

As we cruised away from the tautog fishermen, Claude slowed the boat and picked up his binoculars. He focused them on a handful of boats off to our left and in the general direction of Virginia Beach.

"Rock fishermen," he said, casing his binoculars and gunning the motor for a quick run to the general vicinity of the fleet of fishing boats.

As we approached the fleet, Claude unracked a rod and handed it to me. "You fish first and let me handle the boat," I countered. 'If you get a strike I'll join you."

He made a few long, but unsuccessful casts while I maneuvered the boat.

"Birds over there!" Claude pointed back in the direction of the bridge-tunnel. I swung the boat around, but hadn't gone a hundred yards before several other boats roared in ahead of us.

"Might as well go somewhere else," muttered Claude in disgust. "They will run right into the school and make it sound. That is one of our problems today with so many inexperienced fishermen on the bay."

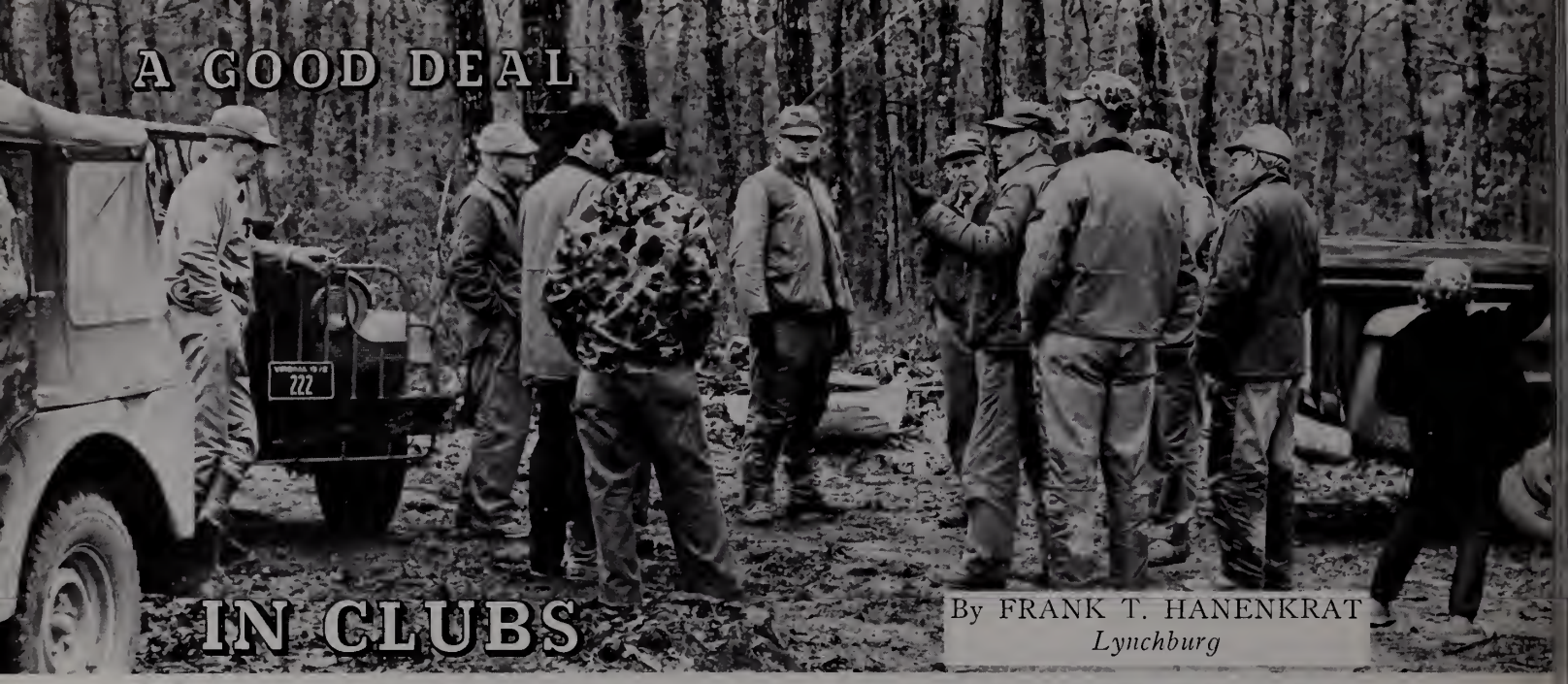
I gave the wheel back to Claude and put away the rod he had rigged for me to use.

"Let's try somewhere else away from this crowd."

Most striped bass are migratory fish that move up and down the Atlantic Coast with the seasons. Many enter the Chesapeake Bay to spawn or spend the winter,

(Continued on page 12)

Author shows off a small school striper.



A GOOD DEAL IN CLUBS

By FRANK T. HANENKRAT
Lynchburg

YOU'RE standing on a frozen logging road, a shotgun in the crook of your arm, your hands thrust deep within your pockets. You're surrounded by hardwoods, thick with undergrowth, and your visibility is limited to about a hundred yards in any direction. It's mid-December, your breath makes clouds of mist in the air, and your toes hurt from the cold. You endure this patiently, absorbing the spell of the world of leafless hardwoods, twisted gray forms above the floor carpeted with brown leaves. Nothing moves, no sound is heard, but you wait, expectant. And then it comes, the sound you've been listening for for the last several minutes—the wild, musical, spine-tingling bay of a hound who has struck a spoor. In the next few minutes the hounds bay intermittently as they work a cold trail; but then begin a roiling, high-tempo chant where the trail becomes fresh. Do they bring the quarry your way? Not this time. The music later ends where the hounds come to a road and are caught by another hunter and returned to their kennels. But never mind—maybe they'll come your way next time; and if not then, perhaps the time after that.

The quarry the hounds were after may or may not have been shot, depending on a number of things. What are you hunting? Why, deer, of course, club style, with hounds. It's one of the most popular and enduring sports in the Southeast, but particularly so in central and eastern Virginia, where hounds are intertwined with so many traditions that the State Legislature in recent years designated a hound as the official State Dog.

Club style hunting with hounds has to rate high in both pleasure and ecological soundness. There is nothing quite like the sensation one experiences while listening to hounds in chase. Standing near a woods road deep in a forest, with no other human in sight, it's easy to imagine that you are living ages ago when man appeared on the earth and first learned that he could drive packs of wild wolf-dogs away from their kill and take the food for himself. The feeling of excitement, almost of exaltation, that you have when the hounds start coming your way with their yelping, musical chant is something I have never been able to put into words. I would judge that I am not unique in experiencing this feeling, for I know many hunters even more dedicated to the sport than I.

I've been enjoying those pleasures almost annually for over twenty years now. Except for those years when I've lived out of the state. I've hunted deer with the Mount Hope Hunt Club since I was old enough to carry a gun. Located in a forested area about fifteen miles from the town of Appomattox, the club is in many ways typical of a large number of similar clubs in the Southeast. The Mount Hope club, and many others like it in central and eastern Virginia (it is illegal to hunt deer with dogs west of the Blue Ridge), came into being when favorable conditions occurred in the 1940's. Prior to that time, a huntable deer population was nonexistent in the central Virginia area. Old-timers in the

A stint on the stand is anything but dull. The music of the hounds holds out hope that game may appear at any moment. Since moving deer usually spot the standers shooting is anything but easy.

region report that in the late 1920's and 1930's, they would sometimes spend several seasons in the woods after other types of game and never see a single deer track, not to mention an actual deer. But then in the 1940's, the abandonment of many small farms, and a rapid harvesting of large tracts of timber created ideal habitat conditions for newly stocked deer. A deer population emerged quickly, and equally as fast, hunting clubs sprang up to take advantage of the opportunities. Many of the clubs flared briefly, then sputtered and went out. Those that remained, like the Mount Hope club, were efficiently organized and were made up of a close-knit group of men capable of a high degree of mutual cooperation, whose activities were characterized by a spirit of good fellowship.

The hunting technique used by clubs is quite simple. The hunters position themselves along one or more back roads so they form a straight line, curve, or V. Each man stations himself on a known crossing site, or "stand." A half-mile or mile in front of the men, a "driver" releases the dogs and, yelling and walking noisily, starts them toward the line of hunters. Deer bed down during the day, and the purpose of the noisy drive is to get the deer in the path of the driver moving toward the waiting hunters, so that when the dogs strike a trail, the chase will proceed in the right direction.

Anti-hunting types attack this style of hunting, claiming that the dogs cruelly run down and kill large numbers of deer, and that a group of men and dogs hunting deer is simply a form of organized slaughter. Both charges are false.

The dogs, to begin with, are not self-hunters desperately seeking food. They are fed daily in the club kennels. They hunt out of instinct, out of the sheer love of the chase. Because they are not driven by hunger, they will seldom attempt to attack a deer. It takes only one experience for a dog to learn that even a small doe can deliver a painful injury with just one blurred flick of a pointed hoof.

When a deer does run, however, it can easily outdistance a dog. The dogs give chase not at a full run, but at a leisurely dog trot, often stopping to sniff and work out a lost or twisting trail. The equivalent deer pace—a leisurely lope—leaves the dogs far behind, and the "fleeing" deer actually spend a great deal of time standing in one spot, listening and looking in all directions.

It is for this reason, among others, that the hunters do anything but "slaughter" deer. In probably 80% of the instances I am aware of, a deer approaching a hunter had spotted the hunter well before he was within shooting range. This is not too surprising when you consider that the gun used in this style of hunting is almost invariably a shotgun. In my area, rifles of caliber suitable for shooting deer are outlawed. This kind of hunting is best carried out in country with dense enough undergrowth to provide browse to support a

heavy deer population. The land must also be relatively flat and crisscrossed with roads to facilitate the drives. Reasons given for not using a rifle include the flat terrain, the heavy undergrowth, the proximity of farms, livestock, vehicles, dogs, and other humans. The only choice, then, is a shotgun, which has, in typical cover, a maximum effective range on deer of about forty to fifty yards. Longer shots have been known to kill deer, but experienced hunters pass them by to avoid the possibility of crippling game.

Accurate placement of a shot is not nearly so easy as it might seem. Because of the heavy undergrowth, a shot must be directed down a narrow corridor of fire between trees and saplings. Many a hunter has fired at a deer, only to have a tree or bush spring up in front of the shot before they could reach the target. In fact, it is a standing joke among most clubs that you can spot the "hot" stands of a given year simply by looking for fresh shot-marks on the trees and bushes.

To compound the difficulty, by the time the deer has come within shotgun range, he has usually spotted the hunter, and this means that he veers and shifts into high gear. The visual impact is that you see a flash of white tail and the deer instantly becomes an enlongated brown blur, bounding in a zig-zag course through the brush in leaps of over twenty feet. Even crossing a road, he may be moving so fast, and in bounds that are so unexpectedly and confoundingly high or low, that even the best marksman leaves the deer unscathed.

Buckshot or slugs, if they connect, will within reasonable range usually bring a deer down. If a deer does get away wounded, the hound hunter has a tremendous advantage over his still-hunting brethren because the dogs will trail the wounded deer and take the hunters to him, often with the weakened deer at bay, or already dead. A wounded deer that escapes to suffer or die is almost unheard of among such clubs as Mount Hope.

Obviously, the successful conduct of a deer hunting club with numerous members, large land holdings, and a considerable number of dogs, requires effective lead-

(Continued on page 22)

UNUSUAL Decorations

By
ELIZABETH
MURRAY
Charlottesville

Illustrated by Lucile Walton

THE state of Virginia must have one of the highest standards in the world for flower arranging of all kinds. Every garden club in the state holds contests for arrangements, spring flowers, buds, single species arrangements, dinner table centerpieces, special color effects, terraria and other long-term living arrangements, and, at this time of year, long-term dried arrangements, Christmas wreaths and decorations.

It is not my purpose here to try in any way to write a treatise on dried arrangements. I feel incompetent and humble in the face of a barrage of experts. However, there are some unusual plants which can be fun to use in the house in the winter time, and which dry naturally on the plant without any special treatment. I thought it might be of interest to point out a few.

The yam family, Dioscoreaceae, has only one genus in this part of the world, *Dioscorea,* divided up into about four species. *D. quaternata* is a partial vine, the stem being erect initially, then twining for the last few feet of its length. The lower leaves are in whorls of 4-7, further along the stem the leaves are opposite while the uppermost leaves are alternate. There are staminate and pistillate flowers both of which are small and inconspicuous. It is the capsule containing the seeds which is the showy part of the plant. Oval, pendulous and three-sided, with each side extended into a slight flange, the capsules resemble miniature Japanese lanterns. They hang in rows along the upper part of the plant and remain on the stem after the seeds have been shed, drying out to form crisp, grayish-brown structures which are slightly translucent. Long strands of *Dioscorea* capsules can be brought into the house where they will last indefinitely and form an attractive addition to any winter arrangement.

One of my favorites amongst naturally dried plants is the teasel. Belonging to a small family, the Dipsacaceae, the teasel, *Dipsacus,* has a dense head of usually blue flowers at the end of a long, often prickly stalk. The name comes from the Greek word for thirst, *dipsa,* a reference to the water which collects in the "cup" formed by the united bases of the leaves in some species. Teasels frequent roadsides, old fields, pastures, stream banks and waste places. By the end of October, the flowers are over and the brown bristly heads of the teasels rise above the other vegetation. Teasels can be clipped and brought in just as they are to enhance indoor decorations. But any family of children who has not been subjected to a session of making "teasel mice" has missed a real treat. The stalk is cut off about half an inch from the head of the teasel and adorned with a blob of sealing wax to form the "nose" of the mouse. The long prickly pointed bracts of the involucre are removed and on either side of the stalk black-headed pins are inserted for the "eyes." The bristles of the teasel are trimmed, particularly severely on one side so that the mouse rests on a flat base. Ovals and a thin strip of felt or leather are then inserted with ordinary pins for "ears" and a "tail," and there is your "mouse!" I still have the teasel mouse which a friend made with me when I was recovering from appendicitis at the age of 7, testimony to the lasting properties of these toys!

The grasses must not be neglected when there are such artistic ones as the bottle-brush grass around. *Hystrix* is a true grass (family Gramineae) and there is only one species in the eastern U.S., *Hystrix patula.* It is an impossible plant to press adequately because of its three dimensional nature, but it dries naturally on its stem and will last indefinitely indoors without any further treatment making an attractive addition to any winter bowl, or a nice arrangement just by itself.

Cotton-grass, *Eriophorum virginicum,* is not a grass; it is a sedge, family Cyperaceae. The sedges are an enormous and rather difficult family of monocotyledons, characteristically with triangular stems and many-flowered spikelets arranged in a dense terminal head or umbel. In all species of *Eriophorum* the bristles are very numerous, elongated and silky, varying in color from white, through cream-colored to tawny. The name *Eriophorum* comes from the Greek word for wool or cotton, *erion,* and *phoros* meaning bearing. Cotton-grass is found in mountain and coastal bogs and other damp acid places in the state. Like most sedges, it flowers in the late summer and fall and the "cotton balls" stay on the plant into the winter. If treated carefully, the sedge can be picked and kept in the house without losing any of its natural beauty.

This is only a tiny fraction of the plants which can be brought into the house in December and without any synthetic drying process. I hope they add a few unusual notes to some of the magnificent winter arrangements which bring the woods into so many Virginia homes. Have a Happy Christmas!

QUEST FOR A CITATION

By WAYNE WILLIAMS
Earlysville

THE southeastern horizon was just beginning to show signs of daylight when Don Linke's pickup pulled into my driveway. I'll never forget the day. It was December 5, 1973. As he appeared out of the darkness and pouring rain, we looked at each other with identical expressions, each asking himself the same question—"Do you think he still wants to go fishing in this weather?!!" Carefully picking his words, in order not to give me the slightest hint as to whether he was excited about fishing in this weather or not, he said, "Kinda wet, ain't it?"

"According to the books, this is the best weather for fishing," I replied, not sure who I was trying to encourage, him or myself.

"Well, I'm willing if you are."

"Okay, then let's go."

Subconsciously, we both knew all along that we would be going no matter what the weather was like. I believe we would both go out in a hurricane to fish. As it turned out, I think that's just what we did.

The rain had let up then from a downpour to just a plain hard rain, so we put on plenty of warm clothing and our rainsuits, filled the boat with our gear and a couple of thermoses of hot chocolate, and headed for the reservoir. By the time we got the boat in the water, it had settled down to a light rain and things were looking up.

But then it happened! The electric motor was in high as we were making our way to one of our favorite fishing holes, about a mile up the reservoir, when suddenly it was as if God's wrath came down upon us. The wind got up, the sky got black, and we could see the rain coming at us like a solid white wave across the reservoir. By the time we got to the fishing hole, we could look out over the water and see nothing but rain coming down at a 35 degree angle and an occasional whitecap.

The ten pound anchor I dropped over the back of the boat wouldn't hold the boat in the gusty wind, no matter how much rope I let out. I had to use the motor in conjunction with the anchor just to hold the boat over the fishing hole.

"Remind me next time to bring the kitchen sink for an anchor!" I told Don as he frantically bailed water with the cup from his thermos bottle.

The fishing hole was a rocky cliff-like bank that dropped almost straight down into the water. Underwater, it sloped down sharply to a 20-25 foot depth. At about 8 feet out it dropped off again into 30-35 feet of water. This deeper water was the old river channel that was there before the reservoir was built. We knew these depths beforehand because we had scanned this area earlier in the fall with a depth sounder. If you are a structure fisherman, you will have already recognized this as a good bassin' hole.

With cold, numb, and waterlogged fingers we tied on our worm hooks, and I baited up with an eight-inch, black, plastic worm while Don went with the purple. We began casting to the cliff, letting the worm slowly "crawl" down the rocky slope to the 20 foot level, then slowly dragging it over the breakline into the river channel. The process was slow and tedious, and it was difficult to "feel" the worm in such high winds.

We had been there about fifteen minutes and were beginning to doubt our sanity when suddenly, as I was about to drag my worm over the dropoff, I felt the ever so slight but unmistakable "tap" of a bass picking up the worm. I very slowly tried to reel up as much slack as I could without the fish feeling me. The wind had rainbowed my line too much to risk trying to set the hook immediately as I usually like to. With a couple of turns of the reel handle I picked up most of the slack, and I could still feel pressure on my line. I set the hook hard, almost throwing Don out of the boat, and instantly I knew I was into something good. I am famous for setting the hook with enough force to break a bass' back, especially when using heavy tackle and a good stiff worm rod. Friends who fish with me have been known to grab both sides of the boat when they saw me picking up my slack. On several occasions I have hooked small bass in shallower water and yanked them out of the water and over the boat. I'm sure you get the message.

Anyway, that's how I knew I had something out of the ordinary when I set the hook. I hardly budged the fish! He simply went to deeper water. I wasn't using a worm rod at the time, but I had a medium action rod with 10-pound test line so I was able to turn him without too much fear of his breaking off. His next move was just what you would expect. He came almost straight up. Just before he broke water, I leaned on him hard to throw him off balance. It worked because all he got out of the water was his head.

At this point I lost all concentration and self control. The mouth on that bass looked like a coal shovel that somebody stuck up out of the water and shook at me!

"Get the net! Get the net!" I kept screaming at Don. Don hesitated, trying to decide whether to get the clippers and cut my line or get the net and help me land the fish. (Bass fishermen are very competitive minded, you know.) He finally grabbed the net and decided to help out.

Meanwhile the bass had gone deep again, and I was slowly working it back up to the boat. Forgetting everything my dad had taught me about landing a "green" fish, I shouted, "Get the net under him as soon as you

can!" Shortly the bass turned up near the boat, and with expert netmanship Don dipped it up before it could make another lunge under the boat. I knew relief like I'd never known it before.

Instantly I made a mad dash for my tackle box to get my handy-dandy fish scale. I hung the fish on it, and it went straight to 8 lb. The scale will only weigh to 8 lb (indicative of my lack of over confidence), and it has about a 10% tolerance, so the question was: Was it large enough (eight pounds or over) for that coveted award that I'd been striving for for years, the Va. Trophy Fish Citation? I'd wanted this award more than the Medal of Honor for so long, that I'd given it up as a dream, and there I sat with the fish in my hand and still didn't know if I had it.

We fished the rest of the morning while the weather got worse and we got wetter. I'll never buy another five-dollar rainsuit. Don caught a nice three pounder along with a few more keepers, but I didn't get another bite. It's no wonder. I was still shaking so bad that my plastic worm probably looked like it was doing the Charleston on the bottom of the lake.

When we finally got back, the first thing we did was take the fish to the nearest store and weigh it. My face must have lit up like a neon sign when it tipped the scales at 8 lb. 7 oz.

Indeed this was a day to remember. If I never catch another citation bass, at least I'll be able to say that I did it once, and I'll have the citation hanging on my wall to prove it—right under the bass.

We went out to the pickup to toast the occasion with a cup of hot chocolate. As Don was pouring a cup, I asked, "Don, is that the same cup you bailed the boat with on our way back to the landing?"

"Yeah, why?"

"Then I wouldn't drink out of it if I were you. I'm not so sure that that was just plain water that was in the boat after I caught that bass!"

Bridge-Tunnel Stripers (Continued from page 7)

joining a large resident population that apparently moves up and down the bay and in and out of major tidal streams, but never out of the bay.

The fall stripers, leaving their homes off the coast of New England and Long Island, arrive off the coast of Virginia in early November under normal weather conditions. A few days later they begin to appear in the waters off of Virginia Beach. This signals the start of the fall and winter run of stripers in the Chesapeake Bay. It is one of the most interesting seasons of the year to fish for the popular stripers.

The fall run continues through December and into the early days of January if the weather stays mild.

This time Claude ran the fast outboard up the bay again and under the bridge near South Island. As we broke into the open water west of the bridge Claude muttered something under his breath. He pointed to circling gulls. "Fish under those birds," he said. This time there were only a few boats working the school.

"Likely small fish." said Claude handing me a rod and telling me to bump the lure along the bottom. As the feeding gulls drifted near I started fishing eagerly.

My first cast produced nothing. Again I cast to the water behind our drifting boat, and started the jerk and pause retrieve that was supposed to do the trick.

Suddenly my rod doubled and I struck back! "Got a fish!" I yelled to Claude.

"Got a net?" I called to Claude as I worked the fish to the boat.

"Don't think you will need one. The fish is not that big." I refused to be disappointed, and swung a good 2-pounder aboard.

Those fish were not large, but it was fast, exciting fishing and I felt we could have filled the fish box had we desired. In opening paragraphs of this story I described our departure for bigger fish.

It was not until the early 1950's that anglers learned to fish for the big schools of stripers that winter in the Bay. The winter fish are more selective in their feeding habits, but there are a handful of proven lures. Probably the most popular of them is the bucktail. A pork rind helps, and yellow and white are the top colors—though I had used a red one with good success. Sizes and styles vary considerably and every angler has his pets—but they all catch stripers.

Spoons give the bucktails stiff competition. Some are dressed with feathers, and old favorites include the Cathers, Nungessers and the Tony Accettas.

Trollers also use a variety of plugs. Popular ones include the Rebel, Creek Chub and Atom plug.

Surgical tubing from the medical storerooms made the striper fishing scene a few years back and it has proved effective and popular as a substitute for eels, a favorite striper bait.

Regardless of the lure used, it should be worked slowly for the winter stripers are sluggish as winter and dormancy approach.

There are a few stripers around the bridge-tunnel all year and anglers take them just about year 'round. However, fall and early winter are prime months with March and April also good as the fish start to stir again— making spawning runs up the major tidal rivers and out of the bay for northern waters.

Darkness was descending upon the marshes as we loaded the boat on the trailer and pulled away from the launching ramp.

By the time we had dropped off the boat and headed south along the bridge, bright lights were beckoning from the Virginia Beach side of the bay. I felt a sense of satisfaction as we breezed along. We had not caught any records, but few anglers are so privileged. I had stripers for my freezer, and within a few months autumn would come again to the Chesapeake Bay and the stripers would be home from New England.

VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

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CONSERVATIONGRAM

Commission Activities and Late Wildlife News . . . At A Glance

LOOK OUT FOR COLORED CANVASBACKS. Canvasbacks marked with colorful plumage dyes were recently released at key migrational concentration areas in the North Central states by wildlife research biologists of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The purpose of the color-marking program is to determine the migrational dispersal and wintering distribution of canvasbacks staging on the upper Mississippi River. During the 1974 fall migration, male canvasbacks were dyed different colors at concentration areas near LeCrosse, Wisconsin and Keokuk, Iowa. The colors used were blue, yellow and pink. Any observation of color-marked canvasbacks should be reported to the Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center, P.O. Box 1717, Jamestown, North Dakota 58401. The following information is requested: observer (name and address), bird (be descriptive). In addition, information on the activity of the bird, size of the flock and species of ducks associated with the bird would be helpful. This research on the migrational habitat and destinations of the canvasbacks is part of a comprehensive investigation to identify major factors influencing the population status of this species. Any observations of these color-marked canvasbacks would be greatly appreciated.

OUTDOOR LIFE PRESENTS AWARD. The OUTDOOR LIFE National Conservation Award for 1974 was presented to Gerald D. Schuder, Sr. of Waynesboro by Governor Mills E. Godwin, Jr. at the Governor's Conservation Award Program in the Hotel Chamberlain at Hampton on October 19. The annual event is sponsored by the Virginia Wildlife Federation and Sears Roebuck and Co. OUTDOOR LIFE says its 1974 award went to Schuder for his role in rallying public support for the regulation of channelization, a controversial practice in which natural streambeds are straightened to speed the flow of water.

FISH AND WILDLIFE AID TOPS $37 MILLION. Over $37 million of Federal Aid funds for sport fish and wildlife restoration and hunter safety programs has been apportioned by Secretary of the Interior Rogers C. B. Morton to the States. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Lynn A. Greenwalt said the $37 million is the first of two annual installments that will be distributed to the States from excise taxes collected in fiscal year 1974. It will be used by the States to help finance fish and wildlife programs during the first half of fiscal year 1975. Funds for fish restoration programs come from a 10 percent excise tax on fishing rods, reels, creels and artificial baits, lures and flies. Funds for wildlife restoration and hunter safety come from an 11 percent excise tax on sporting arms and ammunition and a 10 percent excise tax on pistols and revolvers. "Since 1938 over $700 million has gone into improving habitat for game such as building dikes to impound deer, managing forest lands and fencing elk and deer from farmlands. 25% has supported research into such things as census-guided selection of hunting seasons, bag limits and life history studies on a variety of game animals. Another 20% has been spent buying lands such as prairie duck sloughs, winter big game ranges, bottomlands, desertlands--in all, more than 54 million acres, an area larger than the six New England States, Maryland and Hawaii combined. Apportioned for Virginia for the Fiscal Year 1975 is $134,516 for fish research, $540,661 for wildlife restoration and $56,260 for hunter safety programs, totalling $731,427 in Federal Aid.

LET'S FEED THE BIRDS

By MARJORIE LATHAM MASSELIN
Richmond

A gift of a feeder and suet cake can brighten a life all winter

"WHAT in Heaven's name is wrong with that dog?" my husband demanded emerging from the cellar where he seems to live lately. It's getting near Christmas, you know, and he's *so* clever about making things, it seems a shame not to let him.

"He's worrying about those squirrels."

"Do you mean he's *chasing* them?"

"Oh, no. He's not taking any undue exercise. He's just sitting there watching and worrying vocally. He expects them to fall and break their necks, I think. Haven't you *seen* them?"

"How can I *see* anything? I'm only on project 9999 on this list you have for me to finish yesterday."

"Well, skip down to project 10017 which is to clip the back hedge before winter. Then you can watch, too. They're harvesting the pecan crop next door and I expect them *all* to fall off those wires from sheer exhaustion. They've been at it for ages."

So the hedges got trimmed, the squirrels got another watchdog and the shepherd got calmed down once he saw that the Master of the Household was in charge and had things in hand. There is a bumper crop of nuts this year and the squirrels have full, bushy tails. When I was a little girl that was *supposed* to mean we were in for a Hard Winter. I wondered about it. It was still like summer just then, but I had seen a junco already; so, as I say, I wondered about it.

A week later the squirrels were still working furiously, and I was on the telephone describing their antics and those of our shepherd to a friend.

"Oh, I know," she said. "But they're such idiots about it! They hide the nuts from themselves and when the going gets really rugged they scramble around even more trying to remember where they have cached the nuts. We always keep a couple of bags in the garage and scatter a few at a time to tide them over."

That seemed to take care of the local squirrel population, and I mentioned that the juncos had arrived rather early, I thought; but before we got well into *that* subject, I found myself blinking twice and saying, "Do you know it's *snowing*?"

The junco, sometimes called the "snow bird," invariably knows what it is doing. When *they* arrive, it means that winter is really *here*. For half an hour or so the maple tree was covered with ice and all this coupled with an announcement from an S.P.C.A. friend that she would never, repeat *never,* make another suet cake as long as she lived, set me thinking that perhaps I had better make some myself and lay in a store for this Hard Winter which seemed so imminent.

Supplementary feeding for wild birds during the winter months when pickings are slim can be very important—especially if you enjoy watching birds and don't want them all to leave you for a more generous host. For years we kept a simple tray-type feeder mounted on a post in the yard, but lately we have discarded it because it seems to attract as many cats as birds! I used to think that cats avoided yards with dogs in them, but this is not so. Dozens of cats pay us regular visits. There is one black one with a white tip on its tail who comes and sits on the back walk facing the kennel fence while Eric, our shepherd, sits opposite. The cat mews and Eric woofs and you would swear the two were exchanging local gossip; it is all that friendly and nice! But on occasion, I have also counted as many as four cats gathered round the foot of the bird feeder, looking up with switching tails in the apparent hope that a sparrow or two will forget and fly down for the spills. Since then we have had a window feeder, but we still hang suet cakes and peanut butter feeders in the trees and pyracantha bushes for the small birds who get pushed out of the big feeder by their more aggressive kin.

Some of them *are* aggressive. Right now the old blue jay that I call Peg Leg, because of a long ago injury from which he recovered, is pecking at the empty window feeder like a woodpecker-gone-berserk. I suppose he hears my typewriter and thinks if I have time for *that* sort of nonsense I can jolly well stir myself and give him a handout. And the mockingbird sits on the railing of the back step every morning, twitching his tail at me and complaining until he gets *his* hand full of raisins. These animals are utterly spoiled! But they are characters, too, and they, like the harvesting squirrels, can give uncountable hours of pleasure if you just sit and watch. I think a window feeder and ten pounds

of wild bird seed is the nicest present in the world that one could give a long-term shut-in, or a child confined to bed with even a short-term illness.

On the suet cakes. They really *are* rather a mess to make, but, like everything else, there are shortcuts if you are lazy enough to devise them. I am.

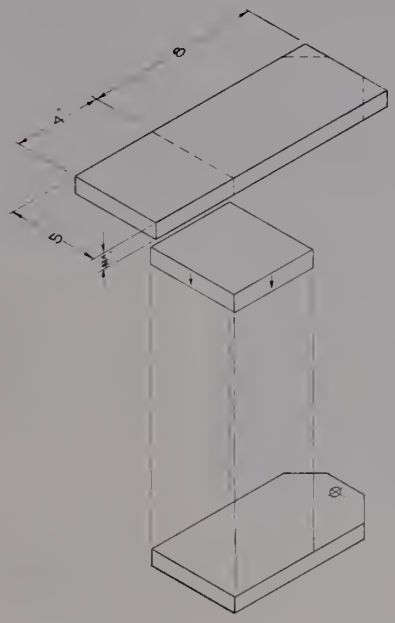
The first thing to do, is to get the suet—lots of it. Usually a pleasant meat-counter man will have more suet than he knows what to do with and will give it to you free or at a very small charge if you explain why you want it. Cut it up into smallish chunks and put a layer of it in one or several two-inch-deep roasting pans. Set these in a very slow oven (about 200 degrees) and go on about your business. At that heat, the suet will melt down slowly without smoking up the kitchen, and after a time you will have a pan half full of liquid fat with shriveled up brown bits of crisp suet floating in it. Skim off the crisp things with a slotted spoon and feed them—though not all at once—to your dog or to the neighbor's dog if you haven't foreseen this necessity to own one yourself. It is good for his coat. Keeps it glossy and healthy. Let the fat cool in the pan, and continue with the business of the day. If it is a particularly nice day, you may want to choose this time to walk to the store and get the rest of the things you will need for the finished product you are in process of manufacturing. A nice brisk walk is invigorating, and you'll meet all the birds who will be enjoying your largesse later on. Perchance they will sing you on your way.

When the fat is cool and ready to solidify, stir into each pan about half a box of bird gravel (when the ground is covered with snow, birds need this in order to digest their food), about 2 cups of peanut butter and as much wild bird seed as the fat will hold together. Smooth the top with the back of the spoon and set it in the refrigerator to harden. Then, cut it, like fudge, into cakes that will fit into your suet feeder. Store these in the freezer and use them, not sparingly perhaps, but only in cold weather when the sun will not melt them before the birds get to them. I put them out only when there is snow and the birds *need* the gravel and fat they contain.

There are a number of types of feeders that can be used for these cakes. They *can* be put in an ordinary tray feeder, but the little birds wil not get much chance at them that way. They can be tucked inside a mesh onion or grapefruit bag—if you can *find* any of these now. Most stores have gone to plastic, which won't do at all. Or if you have a real suet feeder designed to hold these cakes, you put them in it. The S.P.C.A. sometimes has these, and I saw some at the Hand Work Shop on Church Hill recently. If you have a clever husband, as I have, you add it to the list—"Item 10018 . . . Make suet feeders." I used the plural because if he is going to cut out *one,* he may as well do several. They make nice presents, too. Wrap the cake in plastic and throw in the recipe for making more as a bonus!

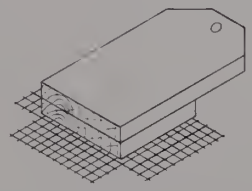
MAKE THIS SIMPLE SUET FEEDER

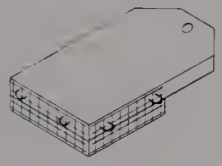
A Unique Christmas Gift



Cut pattern from 1 inch lumber or EXTERIOR plywood ½ to 1 inch in thickness and assemble as shown.

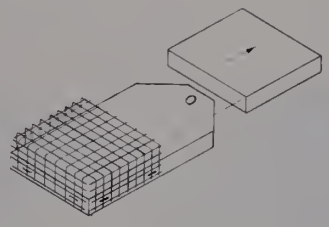
Cut hardware cloth as shown.



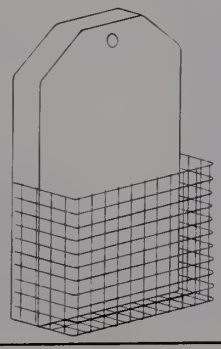


Fold and tack hardware cloth to large backboard.

Remove form and feeder is finished.



Complete with a plastic wrapped suet cake this inexpensive gift is ready to give hours of pleasure.



Mill Quarter Plantation

RAMBLING IN THE SUBURBS

By RICHARD KEVORKIAN
Richmond

A Wistful Look at Urban Sprawl and The Sylvan Beauty We Are Losing

WHEN I was growing up in Richmond, there were no shopping centers or tract house developments to confuse which was city and which was country. Then it was an easy matter to drive out of the city and actually be in the country. As a young man, I often enjoyed the sounds and sights of wildlife. I felt like a privileged observer, being allowed to respond on casual visits. It was years later that I learned about the wonderful balance between man and wild game, both having a use for each other.

When I became a serious hunter, I no longer had that same casual interest in wildlife. But the ground had been laid that enabled me to intensify my interest in and knowledge of wild game habits. I recognized the thin line that exists between good and indifferent wild game management.

I have many memories of hunting since the day my Dad brought home a single barreled Iver Johnson. He never made it clear whether it was for me. It was one of the few times boundaries in our house were not established. My guess is that he wanted to see if I would take a natural interest in the weapon, rather than handing it to me as a gift.

One of the most poignant stories is about a Hungarian farmer known as Pedro. His place was off Highway 360, about 30 miles from Richmond, and a school friend and I used to get up early and hunt in those few precious hours after dawn and before classes on weekdays. I met Pedro after Buck Slaughter, who did odd jobs for my father, learned I could drive a car.

Buck was as gentle a man who ever lived. He had an easy manner and a slow way of speaking which immediately put you at ease. One afternoon, a few days after he had run his car into a country ditch, he asked me to drive him to a small farm not far from Richmond. In those days, after one left the city, you were in the country. There were no shopping centers or developments confusing which was city and which was country. Off we went in my family's 1948 De Soto, finally turning right on a country road. We passed a church with a well on its front lawn, a lumberyard, and a stock car speedway. We passed where Buck's car a week before had run off the road, and finally came to a one-story, unpainted frame house roofed with cedar shakes and having a large brick chimney.

Buck got out and knocked on the door shouting Pedro's name. The door opened and framed in the doorway was a strange-looking old woman. Her head was covered with a cap fitted down to her nose. She obviously couldn't see, but seemed to know her visitor by voice. Buck introduced me while he sat down at a table which seemed to occupy all the room in the house. The floor was hard-packed dirt but had been swept clean. Cooking and heating was by an old wood-burning stove.

In a few minutes in walked a big man with broad shoulders and strong features. He slapped me on the back and seemed to know me from my Dad's store. He sat down and spoke to his sister in Hungarian. She pulled a large loaf of home-made bread out of a cupboard and sliced it at the table, using her fingers as a guide. Then she placed three jelly glasses on the table, followed by two gallons of wine—one red and one pale yellow. Pedro laughed and made conversation in broken English and Buck settled down for some serious tasting. I was allowed a little of each and had many slices of bread pressed on me. As though by agreement they

Picturesque Mill Quarter Pond

both finished their wine, stood up, and waited for whatever wine Buck chose to be brought forth by the blind sister. In those days $2.00 a gallon was the going price. Later those gallons often came to be shared by my friends on picnics, dances, and on several occasions I recall the wine being used at communion.

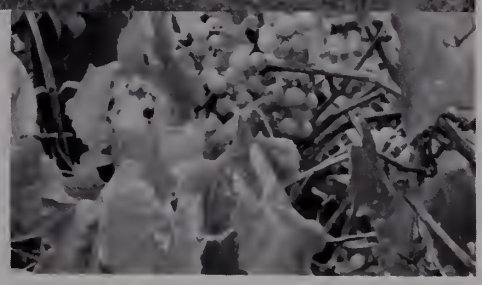
On that afternoon I realized why Buck's car ended up in a ditch.

Pedro would walk several miles to a grocery store, buy sugar, 100-pound sacks of flour, and walk back none the tireder for it. His energy seemed limitless. His sister's eyes had been gouged by a bull when she was a child. My mother went with my father one night and the sister went outside to gather Mother some flowers out of her garden, it not mattering to her that it was dark outside. Years later I learned that Pedro had died and his sister had been committed to a rest home, dying a good supply around until hunting season.

I visited the old farm last season to renew my hunting ties. The land had just been sold for $250,000.00. The house had burned down except for the chimney, and the grapevines were unkept and overgrown.

Pedro allowed me to bring a few friends with me to hunt. Until that time, I had relied on my father and his friends. Now, alone, I learned that quail were most likely found in fields in early morning or early evening. I enjoyed the crunch of frosted ground as I walked with my Iver Johnson at high port. I thrilled to the sound of flushing quail and was intoxicated by the smell of gunpowder, whether I hit target or not. My earliest remembrances were not of game bagged but of the hunt. I had begun to use all my senses.

Mill Quarter plantation was another favorite hunting ground. It belonged to an old German gentleman, Frederick Bohlen, who had earned his money importing and exporting tobacco before the first World War. The two-storied brick house was surrounded by tall oak trees which had enough squirrels living in them to tempt even the most casual hunter. The house was large with broad random-width board floors. When you walked into the hallway, the floors creaked and an old grandfather clock in the hall would make a soft chiming sound. The rooms were sparsely decorated with tall windows covered with Venetian blinds, satin curtains hanging to the floor on either side. Palms and Oriental carpets seemed to be the essential items in every room except the kitchen, which had a well-used look.



A wildlife haven, the old overgrown fencerow with its berries and grapevines is nearly extinct.

Outside the main house was a well with crank, bucket, and rope. No matter how hot the weather, the water was ice-cold and the lack of chemical additives was noticeable. In the front yard was a sun dial and the sweet smell of grass growing dark green under the oaks. Beyond the house were large fields separated by hedgerows. One could hunt the fields for birds, kick up an occasional rabbit in the hedge, or hunt the dense cover of trees on either side of the fields for squirrels.

You could find arrowheads down near the creek uncovered by a good rain. The creek, during rainy weather, was four feet wide and all of one-half feet deep. There were reports that during World War II German submarines were coming up the creek and docking, a story that seems to have reflected a local need for excitement. In the spring of each year we would go and picnic at Mill Quarter pond. At Mill Quarter I fished, hunted, and learned that land need not be remote and away from civilization in order to protect and nourish game. Today Mill Quarter is a housing development.

Any farm with sensible management can have its share of wildlife. Small hedgerows left between cultivated fields provide substantial cover for a limited amount of wildlife. Quail are not citizens of heavy uncut forests. They survive in farming communities, taking advantage of the fields and their crops. Wooded areas along the edges of the fields provide excellent cover for quail, rabbits, and squirrels, and good pro-

Abandoned farm land attracts wildlife and developers.

(Continued on page 20)

Rabbits help develop budding hunting skills.

HUNTING OLD NO. 1

By BOB GOOCH
Troy

THE popularity of game animals is often a nebulous thing, subject to the whims of hunters and the abundance of the species. Here in the Old Dominion, for example, the gray squirrel is considered the number one game animal. The cottontail rabbit has to settle for second place. But nationally the cottontail holds a pretty firm grip on the number one position. Throughout the United States the two popular game animals vie vigorously for the hunter's favor, and in many states the bushytail comes out on top.

In recent years the cottontail has been handicapped in Virginia because of its spotty and unpredictable distribution. Rabbit populations have bounced about like a rubber ball, forcing a feast or famine diet on the nimrod. This is reflected in the estimated annual harvests. The Old Dominion squirrel bag is almost twice the take of rabbits. One recent survey placed the squirrel harvest at over two and a half million while the bunny kill was slightly under a million and a half. This was true even though the same survey showed squirrel hunters were only slightly more numerous than rabbit hunters.

The rabbit's popularity in Virginia has suffered from these erratic population trends.

The Coumission of Game and Inland Fisheries in cooperation with the Wildlife Research Unit at VPI is studying the problem. Hopefully the study will point the way to better rabbit hunting in the Old Dominion.

As most rabbit hunters know all too well, cottontails, seemingly abundant in late summer as they feed and play near the edges, vanish by the time the November hunting season rolls around. Someone has said that only one out of twenty young cottontails survive their first year. Even so the animals are extremely prolific. If even half of them made it for six months, there would be plenty of game for the fall and winter hunting.

If the problem has a solution, our game managers will uncover it.

In the meantime hunting is not going to hurt our often meager supply of game. As is the case with most game animals, regulated hunting is not a threat.

Much of the cottontail's popularity can be attributed to the eager little beagle hounds used to chase him. Most rabbit hunters own a pack of the little hounds. The popular little dogs are friendly, even tempered and a joy to hunt with and care for. And a hunter can feed a dozen beagles less expensively than he can three or four large dogs.

Few hunting thrills top a rabbit chase on a frosty November morning. The tiny hounds, the melodious notes of their eager music warming the nippy air, will hunt all day if there is game to keep them interested. In fact, assembling the dogs at the end of the day can be a real problem. Though friendly and well dispositioned, beagles are noted for their independence. They are just about impossible to call off of a trail. More than one frustrated hunter has had to go home without his dogs and return for them the next morning. A smelly jacket left at the site will hold the dogs until he returns for them.

The nimrod fortunate enough to own a pack of good beagles leaves much of the hunting to the dogs. He must lead them into good rabbit country, however, so a knowledge of rabbit cover and habits is essential.

Bro Rabbit and the Brier Patch is an old fable, but it is just as applicable today as when it was told to that first wide-eyed child. The cottontail is a farm species. The farmer's fields and crops provide him with food, but it loves the edges. Good cover must be close by—brier patches, brush piles, fence rows, thickets, and in the Old Dominion that well-known and often cussed honeysuckle. This is the kind of cover the rabbit hunter seeks, and if he can find it close to water so much the better. Creek bottoms often provide lucrative hunting grounds.

Rabbit sign is not hard to recognize. The tiny round droppings of the cottontail give it away. And in the winter rabbit tracks in the snow are recognized by even the casual observer.

Once he has his dogs down in good rabbit territory

the hunter will improve his chances if he pitches in and helps with the hunting—kicking brush piles, tossing stones into brier patches and stomping through patches of honeysuckle. He may even jump a bunny before his dogs do.

But once he gets the rabbit up and going, he lets the dogs take over. The chase is the best part of the hunt—filled with anticipation and hound music. If the rabbit doesn't hole up by diving into a convenient woodchuck hole, the chase is likely to be a long and merry one.

Most cottontails will eventually return to the area from which they were routed. It's home to them. Hunters can take advantage of this habit by posting themselves along possible return routes.

Beagles rarely press a rabbit. Few can match its speed. The pursued bunny will usually run in spurts, keeping a safe distance ahead of the hounds. The rabbit may clip along hundreds of yards ahead of the pack, so the hunter should keep alert. His chance may come much more quickly than anticipated. The rabbit may dash suddenly into view and stop to listen and watch, or it may mosey along, hopping at a comfortable pace.

While they are probably much in the minority, some hunters go after rabbits without dogs—mostly because they do not own beagles. A good example is the young hunter. Rabbits and squirrels launch the majority of young men on their hunting careers.

The hunter can work known rabbit cover and kick the bunnies out himself. He will have to shoot them on the jump, however, as it will probably be hours before the rabbit, not pressed by hounds, moseys back home. Just as the beagle owner helps his dogs the lone hunter can kick brush piles, stomp honeysuckle, and toss stones into brier patches. If he works at it, he will route out some game.

He can also walk a zigzag course through good rabbit cover, pausing periodically. It is the nature of a rabbit to sit tightly unless almost stepped upon by the hunter, but like most game it does not trust a standing hunter. Possibly it fears it has been spotted. In any event the hunter should be prepared to shoot when he pauses in his hunting efforts. For that is the moment the rabbit is most likely to explode from its form.

On cold but sunny days, rabbits like to sun themselves on the protected slopes. When they do, a hunter with trained eyes can spot them in their beds—or forms. Usually the hills with southern exposures are best for this kind of hunting. The hunter armed with a .22 caliber rifle or bow and arrow should comb these sun-filled areas thoroughly, letting his eyes sweep back and forth as he moves slowly. Once he spots a rabbit he should shoot quickly before the animal becomes alarmed and makes a dash for it.

Tracking rabbits in a fresh snow is fun and sometimes productive. Cottontails roam mostly under the cover of darkness, so the first morning after a new snow is an ideal time to pick up rabbit tracks. A single rabbit can put down lots of tracks, and it may be difficult to unravel a trail.

Eventually the bunny will head for a bed and its tracks will tell the story. If the trail disappears into a brush pile or thicket, the hunter has his quarry pinned down.

Like its rival the bushytail, the cottontail can provide hours of excellent hunting for a wide variety of hunters. The beagle man with his shotgun, the bowhunter and the rifleman with his little 22 all look to the cottontail for top sport and fine eating.

The problem at the moment is finding a way to keep a good supply around until hunting season.

The bowhunter finds rabbits a real challenge. Spotting the bunnies in their forms takes skill.

A Beautiful Dark, Rainy December Day

By THOMAS D. JONES
Warrenton

THERE is an old saying, "You can take the boy out of the country, but you can't take the country out of the boy." This was more true in my boyhood days of forty-five or fifty years ago than now, since there is not that much difference between the country boys and city boys anymore.

Back in the twenties, when I grew up on a big farm in lower Culpeper County, there were quite a few wild turkeys around Batna, Eckington and Stevensburg, and in our own woods; and it was the height of almost every boy's ambition to get one.

My first turkey hunt was in 1927. I saw one killed on the wing right in front of me. I almost got a shot at another but was a little too slow. One Christmas day in the thirties, while I was a student at V.P.I., the foxhounds flushed several turkeys out of our woods, and our domestic flock was chasing one around our yard. But I couldn't get out before it went sailing away as I opened the door. On November 15, 1949, I went on a turkey hunt in the "flats"—a good turkey territory—but had to leave early expecting a call from U.Va. Hospital announcing my daughter was about to be born. Instead however, the call was to bring my wife home for another two weeks of waiting.

After that the few times I went turkey hunting, where turkeys had often been seen, I never saw one—probably because my companions and I didn't really know how to hunt them. So it turned out I never got a shot at one.

Then on November 16, 1973, at my fortieth reunion at V.P.I., as my cousin and roommate for three years, Dr. James Lucius Davis of Waynesboro, and I were reminiscing, he invited me to Augusta County for a turkey hunt—an invitation which I eagerly accepted.

In early December James called to ask me to come over on December 13. The day dawned bleak and rainy, but I was determined to go. When I arrived at Waynesboro, there was snow on the ground and the weather was foreboding. James' nurse showed me through his offices where he was still seeing patients. Then his wife, Kay, served us a delicious lunch of oyster stew, country ham sandwiches, and fruit salad.

Just as we finished, Ralph L. Weaver, Commissioner of Game and Inland Fisheries, who was to accompany us, called to see if we thought the weather was too bad: We said, "not for us." Ralph turned out to be not only a fine gentleman but fantastic as a hunter and sportsman.

He joined us somewhere in Augusta County and told us of his strategy. He had already killed one turkey this season and was determined for me to get one. Ralph said he would go up a certain mountain hollow where he thought he would find turkeys in a laurel thicket. If he found them here, he would shoot into the air. He said we were to wait at a clearing on the other side of the mountain and the turkeys should be there about forty minutes after he left us. He came over in his jeep at the appointed time and was surprised we hadn't seen the turkeys.

He then told me he would take the ridge and I the creek and James should stay at the upper end of a feed patch. Then he would call them. After a few calls he motioned to me from the ridge that he had sighted two turkeys. When we met a few minutes later, he was again surprised I hadn't seen them. He gave me another briefing, and, sure enough, after hiking another two hundred yards I saw a turkey suddenly appear out of the mist and drizzle. It was projected in the third dimension, standing behind some grass and briers under a tree about forty or fifty yards from me. Quickly I took aim at its head and fired my Winchester twenty-gauge model twelve. My heart skipped a beat and the turkey fell. I had just gotten my first turkey, and also my first shot at one. It was checked in with Ralph as a twelve-pound young gobbler. When I dressed my prize back at home in Warrenton, I found four shot in the head and three in the front part of the back.

Without the fine guidance and sportsmanship of my cousin James and that of Ralph Weaver, I would still be talking about various turkeys I almost got a shot at over forty years ago.

This experience brings to mind many pleasant hunts for all kinds of small game and some for turkey with good companions in November, December and January, a quiet nice season to be close to nature.

Thus I question the poet who wrote: "The melancholy days are come, the saddest of the year. . ."

I just don't agree with him. It is a beautiful, restful time for the outdoorsman and hunter.

Rambling in the Suburbs (Continued from page 17)

tection from their natural predators.

All these experiences took place a short distance from Richmond. No great amount of preparation was necessary, no long trips. Had the distances been greater I would not have had the opportunity to gather my own information, and gain it from nature a little at a time. Each season revealed to me its own influence on the life cycle of wildlife.

Perhaps one problem of housing developments is that they fail to take into account the ongoing dynamics of nature. They provide less area for mutual tolerance between man and nature.

COMMISSION PERSONNEL RECIPIENTS IN GOVERNOR'S AWARD PROGRAM

Five Game Commission Personnel were among those honored at the twenty-fourth annual Governor's Conservation Achievement Program held at the Chamberlain Hotel October 19, 1974. The award program is jointly sponsored by the Virginia Wildlife Federation and Sears Roebuck and Company.

Those receiving recognition from the Game Commission included, left to right, MR. E. E. EDGAR, Norfolk, Va., Certificate of Merit in the field of Communication. Mr. Edgar is 2nd Congressional District Commissioner on the Game Commission. EDWARD G. MITCHELL, JR., The Virginia Game Warden responsible for the county of York and the cities of Newport News and Hampton, Va. Mr. Mitchell, who was selected as warden of the year for 1974 from the Game Commission received special recognition from the Virginia Wildlife Federation during the program. JAMES W. ENGLE, JR., Land Coordinator for the Commission, was recipient of the Forest Conservationist of the Year Award. Engle, who has since 1950 been active in the forest conservation, Game Biology and Forest Management and Forest-wildlife coordination programs is from Swoope, Va. LT. GOVERNOR JOHN N. DALTON, who represented Governor Mills E. Godwin, Jr. during the ceremonies. RALPH L. WEAVER, from Stuarts Draft, Va., Certificate of Merit, Wildlife Phase. Mr. Weaver is Commissioner from the Sixth Congressional District. DR. ALLAN A. HOFFMAN, from Danville, Va., Certificate of Merit, Wildlife Phase. Dr. Hoffman is Commission fromer the Fifth Congressional District.

ership and close cooperation among its members. Deciding where a drive will be made, organizing the placement of the men on individual stands, selecting the dogs to be released, designating a driver, and even such routine matters as stocking food for meals, cooking, and washing dishes requires leadership and planning. The care and upkeep of a large kennel of dogs is particularly costly and time consuming. To meet its various expenses, clubs often have annual membership fees of $100 or more, though clubs with few facilities can charge less, while those with more elaborate facilities must charge substantially more.

Critics of these clubs maintain that they are "closed societies" and "exclusive." The charges are no doubt true to some extent, but at the same time, for a club to open its doors to everybody would be to invite disaster, as history reveals. Several clubs, to my knowledge, have dissolved because of internal disharmony. With Mount Hope, as with most strong clubs, membership is granted only to persons well acquainted with at least several regular members. Guests are occasionally entertained with a day's hunt, but absolute strangers are unwelcome. Strangers to this type of hunting have been known to get excited and shoot at dogs or in the direction of other hunters. The Mount Hope club has never had a hunting accident in its thirty-three years, and no doubt most of its members are determined to keep it that way.

Despite the criticisms that are directed at clubs, I believe they are invaluable forces in the conservation of natural resources in their region. Here are some of the relationships that exist between the Mount Hope club, various landowners, game management personnel, and wildlife itself.

The club acquires exclusive hunting rights to large tracts of corporate-owned timberland in exchange for payment of annual property taxes on the land. But in addition to payment of taxes, the club twice annually carries out "road maintenance" operations in which it clears fallen timber and fills potholes along all the logging roads and fire trails that crisscross its holdings. Both the club and landowner benefit by this. But cooperation does not end here. The landowner observes Game Commission guidelines for harvesting and reforestation programs in order to create better game habitats. One such program includes a number of "food patches" planted in small cleared areas scattered throughout the forest. The Game Commission donates a scientifically balanced selection of seeds for planting; the lumber company donates the land; and the Mount Hope club provides the labor involved in making and maintaining these plantings. Without this close cooperation among the three parties, it is doubtful that the food patch program produced by these parties could be carried out. As a result of these plantings, all kinds of game—grouse, quail, rabbit, turkey, squirrel, deer, and others—benefit from the cover and food provided, and club members are enabled to hunt other kinds of game on the club holdings though this is never an organized activity. Members do so entirely on their own.

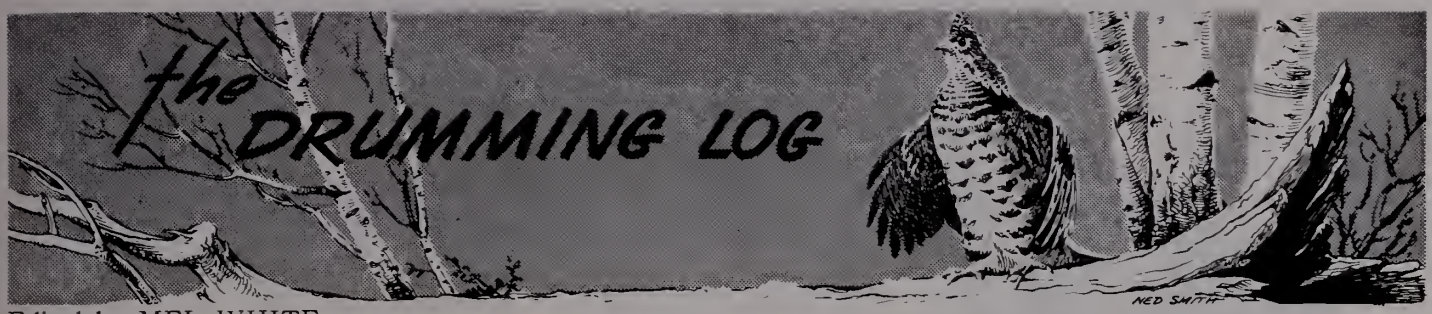
Private landowners also develop mutual cooperation with clubs. The Mount Hope club, for example, has exclusive hunting rights to several farms, granted in some cases in exchange for club membership, but in many cases just out of friendship by a non-hunting farmer. Many of the cooperating farmers practice methods that create, rather than destroy, game habitat. They plant hedgerow fences, for example, instead of practicing clean-farming; and leave crop-margins as food patches near wooded areas for the benefit of wildlife. Both practices provide additional cover and food to a wide variety of wildlife.

Both corporate and private landowners recognize one tremendous asset in granting hunting privileges exclusively to one club: they know that the club acts as a responsible party and will take care of property, crops, and land in a way "occasional" hunters might not. Some private landowners, in fact, seek to donate the hunting rights to their land to clubs for this reason alone.

Another benefit rendered by hunting clubs is the least understood by non-hunters: by harvesting the deer, the clubs help maintain an ecological balance. Wild predators of deer—wolves, bear, wildcat, etc.—have been eliminated by man, and without these "natural" enemies, deer populations, if unchecked, would erupt and overrun farmland, destroying crops and gardens, and competing with cattle for pasture. Keeping the deer population under control also prevents diseases from becoming epidemic in overly dense deer populations.

This harvest represents the wise utilization of a natural resource—and also a valuable contribution to the family larder. In 1972-73, during a two-male-deer bag limit season, the Mount Hope club averaged about 1.7 deer per regular member. With the custom of equal division among club members, this represented approximately 150 pounds of venison per man. Much of it was consumed in the clubhouse, but a lot went to family kitchens, too. Yet despite these harvests, the deer populations in most club areas continue to remain stable, or actually to increase, from year to year.

In my opinion, nothing quite beats club-type hunting. You spend the day among friends, enjoying their fellowship and the freedom of the outdoors, and the excitement of the chase. The hours spent on a stand are never dull, for even if a deer does not come your way for weeks on end, the music of the chase is yours to listen to on almost every drive; and there is the satisfaction of knowing that the deer is probably headed in the direction of one of your good friends. And then there is the continuing pleasure of feeling that you are a part of a group that works with, and not against, Nature itself. Everything considered, club hunting can't be beat.



Edited by MEL WHITE

Art Provides Recreational Experience for Retarded Children

For the past three years Tommy Nobis of the Atlanta Falcons has given his off-season time to mentally retarded children throughout the State of Georgia. These children are special to Tommy and he enjoys serving and giving of his time in their behalf. Through his Super Sports

Telethon, telecast in the Metro Atlanta area over WTCG, Channel 17, he has raised over $100,000 to help provide recreational experiences for these children. You can also help Tommy in his efforts to help his young friends by buying an art print of the Falcon for $60.00. One-half of the proceeds of the sale of these prints, in the form of a donation from the National Wildlife Art Exchange, Inc., Vero Beach, Florida, to Tommy, will be utilized for the express purpose of seeing that these deserving children may participate in recreational experiences provided by the Georgia Special Olympics. Checks should be made payable to SCORE, inc., P. O. Box 89144, Atlanta, Georgia 30312. The price of each print is $60.00 each or multiples thereof. This amount includes packaging and delivery charges.

Janette Clary used a 45-pound bow to down this 120 pound deer in Brunswick County. The 20 yard shot was made from a tree stand.

A one pound, one ounce citation rock bass from Diascund Creek. The bass was caught by Miss Catherine Childress last July.

By JOHN W. TAYLOR
Edgewater, Maryland

The Eastern Panther

It will surprise many to find the Eastern panther on Virginia's list of endangered species. It was generally thought to be extinct, until a few years ago, except in the Florida portion of its range. The last authenticated occurrence of the animal within the State was nearly one hundred years ago.

But recent sightings by reliable observers have stirred new interest in the "panther mystery". Malcolm Edwards, a Jefferson National Forest biologist, Harold Trumbo, a biologist with the Game Commission, and Ronald Warfield, a ranger on the Blue Ridge Parkway have logged reports of panthers. In August, 1971, they listed twenty records for the previous twelve months. Most of them came from the Potts Mountain area in Craig County and from the territory around the Peaks of Otter. In 1950, a panther was closely observed on Shenandoah Mountain near Harrisonburg, and there have been more recent sightings in Highland County along the West Virginia line.

Buttressing this evidence are indications that the panther is making a comeback elsewhere in the East. Intense investigations in Eastern Canada revealed a population of 25 to 50 animals, where its presence was doubted before. And there is now panther talk around campfires in the Adirondacks and in northern Maine.

Sceptics question that an animal so large could escape detection, but naturalists hold that it is quite possible. It is largely nocturnal and lives in the roughest of terrain. It is extraordinarily keen of sight, scent and hearing and disappears at the mere hint of man's presence. Even in the West, where panthers are still present in numbers, it takes the use of trained dogs to find one, and many ranchers live out there lives in panther country without ever seeing one.

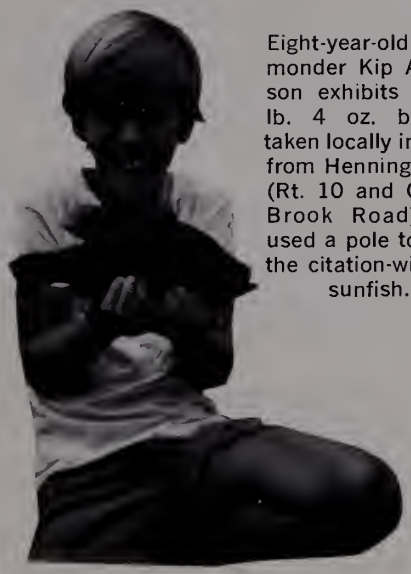
If panthers do exist in Virginia, they are obviously on the brink of extinction, and every effort should be made to prevent killing them, accidentally or purposeful. The State Game Commission has given them complete protection, an important and necessary step, but needed also is an educational program to bolster public awareness of their possible presence. An ecological course in the public schools could reinforce the role of the panther in nature's scheme, and help insure that these splendid creatures are not slain through ignorance.

Edited by ANN PILCHER

LOOKIN' BACK

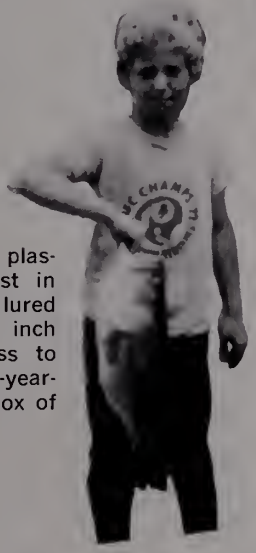
Spring and summer 1974 brought exhilarating successes for some young Virginia anglers. A few are featured below, and this columnist offers best wishes to '75 anglers for lots of luck with the lunkers.

It was mid-July when Jeffrey Allen, age 7, of Virginia Beach pulled an 8 lb. 4 oz. largemouth from Northwest River and earned a freshwater fish citation. Length of catch: 24-1/2 inches; girth, 17-3/4 inches.

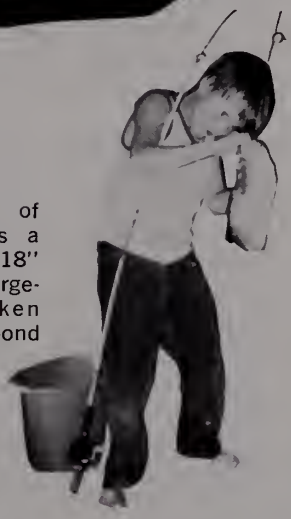


Eight-year-old Richmonder Kip Anderson exhibits his 1 lb. 4 oz. bluegill taken locally in June from Henning Pond (Rt. 10 and Gravel Brook Road). He used a pole to land the citation-winning sunfish.

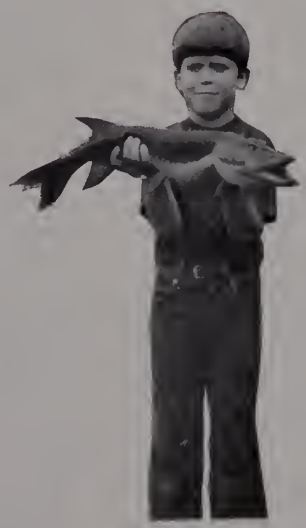
Jeffrey Johnson's chain pickerel, taken from Lake Monticello May 4, weighed 4 lb. 1 oz. and measured 28 inches. The Charlottesville youth used spinning rod to land the lunker.



Last June 27 a plastic minnow cast in Opal, Va., pond lured this 7 lb. 23 inch largemouth bass to the line of 10-year-old Robert Wilcox of Warrenton.



Howard Hopkins of Herndon takes a close look at his 18" almost 4 lb. largemouth bass taken from a local pond May 30.



9-year-old Richmonder Carlton Hunter Hilbert caught a 4 lb. 2 oz. chain pickerel on Mother's Day in a private Goochland County pond. The "pike" was 25 inches long.

First Tree Farm Scholarship

Last fall John A. "Andy" Sadler, 18, of Cascade, Va., near Danville, became the first recipient of the Virginia Tree Farm Committee's $500 scholarship awarded a freshman forestry student entering the Division of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences at VPI & SU. The scholarship is the first, not only in Virginia but in the entire United States, to be made by a state Tree Farm Committee.

Andy was third in his senior class of 240 at Tunstall High School, Dry Fork, where he had been active in scouting, band, and school plays. At Virginia Tech his classes center on forest management and outdoor recreation.

Edited by JIM KERRICK

FIRST AID ABOARD

Accidents happen anywhere, even when boating, so always keep a first aid kit handy aboard your boat. Though there are many kits on the market, you can make up your own.

Aspirin. For headaches from too much sun or mild aches and pains, aspirin is best.

Dramamine. Even an 'ole salt' can develop sea-sickness from rough seas or too much sun.

Adhesive tape, bandages and sterile pads. A variety of sizes of bandages should be kept aboard as well as sterile pads for cleaning wounds.

Antiseptics. The individually wrapped antiseptic swabs are best so there won't be any loss of strength.

Pain killers. Use those prescribed by your doctor.

Suntan oil. Whether you're tanning or screening out the sun, you need protection. Use any of the many products on the market and use it liberally.

Burn ointment. You'll need this for sunburn as well as galley burns. If available, ice is very good for burns.

Witch hazel. Eyes get tired and bloodshot from too much wind, sun and glare. Cotton soaked in witch hazel and put on the eyes does wonders.

Wire cutters. Particularly needed for the fisherman who may get a fish hook stuck in his finger. Learn to remove a fish hook safely. The easiest way is by pushing the hook through the skin, snipping off the barb end, then pulling the hook back the way it went in. (If you do have a fish hook problem, you should get a tetanus shot—if you haven't had one recently.)

Tweezers: Handy to use in removing slivers.

Buy small containers of ointments and antiseptics if individually wrapped dosages aren't available. This will lessen the chance for evaporation and deterioration. And don't forget to take along any prescription medication you might need. If you're going on a long voyage, take your prescription with you.

Your first aid kit should be in a waterproof container that resists rust and corrosion and should be located where anyone can find it. Tell boating guests the location of the kit.

Remember to check the first aid kit before every outing to replace items already used. A first aid handbook is a handy thing to keep around. You can contact the American Red Cross for further information about kits and for free first aid classes and booklets.

CONSERVING YOUR BOATING FUEL

The fuel shortage doesn't mean the boater has to store his boat "till better times"—it just means he needs to do everything he can to get more mileage from every gallon of gas he uses.

To get the most out of your boating fuel:

Match the engine to your boat with the recommended load capacity and distribute weight evenly. Overloading your boat will only make your engine work harder and use more gasoline. Make sure the engine is angled properly.

Be careful when fueling. Spilled gasoline is not only dangerous, it's wasteful.

Follow the manufacturer's recommendation when mixing oil with gasoline. Don't mix a full can of oil into a gas tank if the tank still has oil mixed in it already. You'd be using too much oil. Some older engines that require a 24-to-1 gas to oil mix can now accept a 2 to 1 mixture if the oil is TC-W rated at 50-to-1. Check with your owner's manual or marine dealer to be sure.

Keep your engine tuned up, particularly if your engine is an older model.

You can conserve gas by running your engine at 2/3 or 3/4 throttle, providing your boat is planing. Check your owner's manual to determine the speed at which your engine operates most efficiently and maintain that speed.

Warm-up time is not necessary. Don't keep the engine running any more than necessary, such as at dockside or while fishing. In fact, fisherman should learn the art of drift fishing rather than trolling for long periods of time.

Avoid extended trips. Not only will you save car gasoline by not trailering your boat long distances, you'll save boating fuel by boating closer to home.

Keep your hull clean and make sure there are no nicks and bends in your propeller.

Limit your water-skiing time; go fishing with friends.

Boatmen are minor users of fuel in relation to other consumers. Recreational boating consumes approximately 1/2 of 1 per cent of the gasoline used by Americans each year. This is equivalent to 1/2 tank of gas per car per year. Boatmen can reduce their gas consumption even more if they will follow a few single conservation steps. It's the practical as well as patriotic thing to do.

Does Your Engine "Match" Its Boat

If you throttle back a "matched" boat, you will be able to save as much as 50 percent of the gas you are used to buying. There should be enough reserve power so that you can throttle back.

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